

**Amendments to the Specification:**

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 5, line 9, with the following amended paragraph:

Each of the straw bales 13 which form the core of the wall 11 are parallelepipeds having a height 13H, a length 13L terminating in opposing ends 13E, and a width or thickness 13W. The invention will be described with reference to a standard California rice straw bale 16 inches wide by 24 inches high by 48 inches long. It will be obvious to those skilled in the art that bales having different dimensions could work equally well with adjustments to certain dimensions of the metal components. The bales 13 are stacked onto foundation wall 12 in an orientation by which the bale length 13L is aligned with the length of foundation wall 12; the height 13H is a measure of the vertical dimension of the stacked bale; and the width 13W constitutes the remaining third dimension, which largely determines the thickness of the wall 11.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

Referring to Figs. 4-8, bracing ladders 21 are secured to the foundation 12 by attachment to an anchor dowel pair 17P. The ladders 21 are distributed along the foundation 12 at intervals equal to three bale lengths 13L, or every 12 feet for a 4 foot bale system. Bracing ladders 21 are secured to the foundation by attachment to an anchor dowel pair 17P by the use of mechanical clamps or the like. The ladders 21 are positioned on the

foundation wall 12 so that the plane of the ladders 21 (the plane containing the various parts that make up the ladders 21) is transverse to the length 21L of the foundation 12 and parallel to the ends 13E of bales 13. The height of ladders 21 is approximately equal to the height of the wall 11 (Fig. 1) which can be as high as 35 feet.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 6, line 11, with the following amended paragraph:

In one embodiment (Figs. 6 and 7), bracing ladder 21 has a pair of spaced-apart parallel rails 22 rigidly held in place by horizontal connecting struts 23H and diagonal connecting struts 23D. The struts 23H and 23D not only unify the ladder into a single structural member, but are laid out in a pattern that creates alternating bale windows 24 and bale abutments 26. The spacing between ladder rails 22 is greater than the bale width 13W, and the height 24H of the ladder windows 24 is greater than the height 13H of the bale 13. Thus, each ladder window 24 can surround accommodate a bale 13 (a bale 13 can pass through a window 24). Diagonal ladder struts 23D provide an abutment for bales 13, preventing a bale 13 from passing through the ladder at the location of ladder struts 23D.

Please replace the paragraph beginning on page 9, line 15, with the following amended paragraph:

Referring, in addition, to Fig. 14, when bales 13 have been stacked to the desired height and spars 41 located, the exposed legs 43 of the spars 41 will be aligned with an anchor dowel 17 in the foundation 12. A connecting rod 51,

preferably #4 rebar, of a length approximately equal to the height of the wall is secured to each anchor dowel 13 and all of the spar legs 43 aligned with that anchor dowel 17. Because of the highly flammable nature of straw bale material, it is not advisable to attach the connecting rods to the dowel 17 and spar legs 43 by welding. Any one of numerous well known mechanical clamping mechanisms for securing two lengths of rebar together (such as compression clamp 50, as shown in Fig. 15) is suitable for attaching the connecting rods 51 to the anchor dowels 17. While similar clamping mechanisms can be used to attach the spar legs 43 to a connecting rod 51, connecting them together with simple wire ties 52 (as indicated in Fig. 16) is satisfactory. Once the connecting rods 51 are secured to dowels 17, spar legs 43 and ladder(s) 44 (if any), a structurally rigid truss system has been constructed that is fully capable of supporting the wall during the application of the membrane 16 (see Fig. 1) without external bracing.